



TECHNOTEACH

ENHANCING GREAT TEACHING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Michael S. Nelson

USING SKYPE IN THE CLASSROOM

Skype is a free and easy way for teachers to open up their classroom and their students to a world way beyond their campus. With Skype, students can learn from other students, connect with other cultures, and expand their knowledge in amazing ways. Teachers and parents can also benefit from Skype in the classroom. Read below to learn how you can take advantage of the power of Skype in your classroom.

Objectives

- Learn how to use Skype
- Consider privacy and safety issues
- Identify uses and advantages of using Skype for your classroom
- Explore Web Resources for Skype in Education

Using Skype

1. Create a Skype account
 - [Getting Started](#) (Mac)
 - [Get a Skype Name Tutorial](#) (Windows)
2. From the Skype Help Menu, select "Getting Started" to:
 - Check that sound works with a test call
 - Find friends and add contacts
 - Make a free call to another computer ([Making a Call](#))
 - Learn how to call regular phones FOR A FEE!
3. Add multiple callers to create a conference call
 - [Make a Conference Call](#) (Mac)
 - [Make a Conference Call](#) (Windows)
 - During a regular call, you can add callers
4. Make a Video Call with a WebCam
 - [Video Calling](#) (Mac - most newer macs have a built-in i-Sight camera)
 - [Video Calling](#) (Windows - most Windows computers require a USB webcam)
 - [More answers about Video Calls](#)
5. Start a Chat Session
 - [Chat and Group Chat](#) (Mac)
 - [Chat and Group Chat](#) (Windows)
6. Share Files
 - [Sending Files](#) (Mac)
 - Sending Files (Windows)

Safety and Use in a District School

If you plan to use Skype in the classroom explain to your students what Skype is and how it works. If you plan to have students set up their own accounts, then talk to them about privacy and security. If students are under the age of 18 it's probably a wise idea that they not reveal their full name, nor complete a Skype personal profile.

Skype uses a lot of bandwidth (Internet speed) and some school and district technology departments ban its installation or use on their network. You may need to point out the educational uses of Skype to your IT director and see if you may be able to reach an accommodation.

Interface

Once installed, Skype will search through your contacts via Hotmail, GMail, Facebook and Outlook and try to find similar settings for your friends, importing them into Skype. To call a friend, identify whether they are online with the green checkmark and either, right-click or double-click to initiate a call.

Safety and Privacy Considerations for School Settings

(Excellent recommendations from [Using Skype in School - Buckinghamshire Grid for Learning](#))

Promoting Education

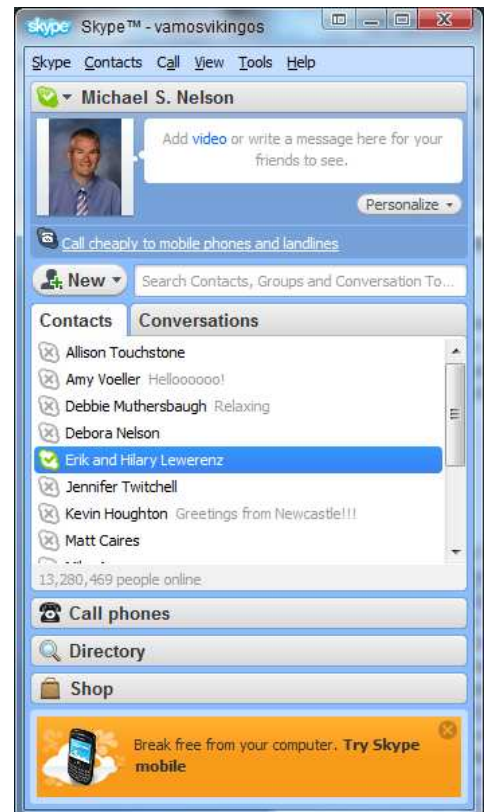
These great ideas are all about teaching students in dynamic ways.

1. **See Me, Hear Me: Skype in the Classroom.** Read how these students had the opportunity to chat with an author of the book they studied via Skype.
2. **Videoconferencing in the Classroom with Skype.** This teacher used the movie "Hoop Dreams" to help teach about social inequality, then was able to get the executive producer of the movie, Gordon Quinn, to participate in a Skype session with her class.
3. **The Many Roles of Skype in the Classroom.** These amazing 7th graders used Skype as a part of their history project that resulted in their collaboration with the curator of the National Museum in Canada.
4. **Field trips.** If students aren't able to participate in a field trip due to factors such as budgetary or distance constraints, use Skype to [bring the field trip into the classroom](#).
5. **Using Skype in the languages classroom.** Find out how this teacher uses Skype to help her students study foreign languages from native speakers.
6. **Skyping in Mike Artell- Illustrator & Author.** This inspirational lesson has an illustrator working directly with 6th graders to work on the art of illustrating and story creation.
7. **After school help.** Use Skype as a tool to provide after school help to students needing extra attention. Tutors, teachers, or librarians can be available at set times in the afternoons for student access.
8. **How to Use Skype in Education (Graybeal).** This class was practicing how to convince the school board to allow a controversial book to be taught in their school and had the opportunity to Skype with the author of the book to help promote their case.
9. **Interviews.** Whether you have students [conducting interviews](#) or your class is interviewed, Skype facilitates the interview process. Individual students can interview other teachers or school staff, sending the Skype feed to the classroom for all to watch.
10. **Guest lecturers.** Have [guest lecturers](#) come to your classroom via Skype.

Promoting Community

Using Skype in the classroom can promote communities within a school or globally.

1. **Inclusion — helping a classmate join the classroom from home.** This blog post explains how a 4th grade class used Skype to help a classmate with leukemia become a part of the classroom from her home.
2. **Connect special needs students.** Students who may have to be out of the classroom due to special needs or IEP requirements don't have to miss any special events in the classroom with Skype.



3. **Blue tongue lizard, vegemite and cricket. What the...????**. This Australian teacher describes her class' experience connecting with a Korean class via Skype.
4. **Foreign culture lessons**. Skype allows students to see first hand what people's homes, schools, clothing, weather, and more looks like. If a festival takes place, Skype can bring it to your classroom too.
5. **Connect with families from around the world**. Form friendships that can easily bridge distance gaps with Skype.
6. **Skype Calls for e-Twinning in L2**. Find out how this teacher brought two classes together that had been Twittering all semester when they finally got to meet "face-to-face" with Skype.
7. **Best Day Ever!**. This teacher describes three Skype calls her class had in one day—the most exciting being with a class in a different time zone with whom her students had been collaborating on a project through Google docs. With Skype, the students got to work at the same time and actually see each other, too.
8. **Present a performance**. Whether your class puts on a play, demonstrates a science experiment, or presents the results of a class project, share the fruits of their works with other classes, parents, or other interested people.
9. **Share field trips with others**. If your class goes out for a field trip, see about connecting with parents or other classes to share your classes' experience.
10. **'Slumdog Millionaire' inspiration uses Skype to help kids in India learn**. Find out how Skype is connecting grannies in the UK with children in India for both a cultural connection and an educational benefit.

Skype Ideas for Teachers and Parents

Teachers and parents can benefit from Skype in the classroom, too.

1. **Professional development**. Teachers can use Skype to access professional development opportunities, such as watching [conference presentations](#).
2. **Share students' work with parents**. Let parents get a first-hand look at what their children are doing with Skype.
3. **Conference with parents**. Whether a parent has to miss a regular conference or a concern comes up that requires speaking with a parent, Skype can provide an opportunity to [connect with a parent](#) that may not otherwise be available for a conference.
4. **Innovative teacher uses Skype and Wikis to involve parents**. See how this teacher helped share information with parents using Skype and the PBS program, [Growing Up Online](#).
5. **Collaborate with other teachers**. Who says Skype has to be fun just for the kids? With Skype, [teachers can collaborate](#) on ideas, projects, and more.
6. **Share travel experiences**. If you will be traveling during the school year, arrange for your substitute to connect with you via Skype and you can share the experience with your class.
7. **Receive teaching feedback**. Have an experienced or mentor teacher watch you teach via Skype and receive valuable feedback.
8. **Be available to students**. If your school is suddenly closed for a while or if you want to set up conference hours for students, use Skype to allow students to [contact you](#).
9. **Tutor former students**. If a student has moved away or you want to offer [accredited online degrees](#) or just moved up from your class, you can be available for tutoring (for free or for a fee) via Skype.
10. **Bring busy parents into the classroom**. A busy parent who has knowledge to share with the classroom may be more likely to be able to make the time for a presentation if she or he can do so with Skype rather than having to leave work and come to the school.

Resources for Getting Started and Using Skype

Find out how you can take advantage of Skype with the advice below.

1. **[Using Skype in the Classroom \(or just learning how to use it!\)](#)**. This teacher provides the basics to get Skype set up with your class.
2. **[Skype in the Classroom](#)**. This article offers help on ways to set up Skype, tips for finding other teachers on Skype, technical obstacles, and more.
3. **[Skype Tutorials for Teachers, Authors, Librarians](#)**. Find a handful of video and text tutorials here to get you going with Skype.
4. **[Classroom Collaboration with Skype](#)**. This primer offers help with using Skype, connecting with others, and ideas for using it in the classroom.
5. **[eduwikius – SKYPE](#)**. This wiki contains plenty of information about using Skype in the classroom and also provides links to additional resources.
6. **[A Skype from the classroom](#)**. Find information on videoconferencing in general, the pros and cons of using Skype, school project ideas, and more here.
7. **[Using skype in the classroom](#)**. Learn from this teacher's experience as she describes using Skype and how to best prepare your class and yourself for a great educational opportunity.
8. **[Skype is a Valuable Educational Tool](#)**. This podcast explains why teachers should use Skype and puts some nasty rumors about Skype to rest.
9. **[Using Skype in schools – some tips](#)**. Read these helpful tips, including suggestions on using Skype usernames at school and home.
10. **[Skype: Talk to Anyone, Anywhere for Free](#)**. Watch this "techtorial" or print the text version to learn the basics of Skype.

Finding Others Using Skype

Here are a few ways to connect with others using Skype in classrooms and to promote education.

1. **[ePALS](#)**. Sign up for a free account here, then find other teachers and classes around the globe using Skype.
2. **[Skype an Author Into Your Library or Classroom](#)**. This site will connect schools with authors through Skype. Short sessions are free, while longer sessions are subject to a fee set by each author.
3. **[Skype in Schools](#)**. List yourself or find others in this directory just for educators seeking Skype collaboration.
4. **[Skype in the Classroom – The EduSkypers Phonebook](#)**. Scroll through these comments to find other teachers from around the world looking to connect through Skype. The most recent are at the very end of the list.
5. **[Global SchoolNet](#)**. This organization works to connect teachers and students around the world through [forensic science programs](#). Browse to find something of interest or start your own project.
6. **[TakingITGlobal](#)**. Another project-based organization, this one focuses on youth looking to make positive global changes.
7. **[Around the World with 80 Schools](#)**. This teacher is hoping to connect schools around the world through short Skype sessions.
8. **[Skype in the Classroom](#)**. Join this community to find other teachers seeking Skype connections.
9. **[Going Global – School Skype Author Visits](#)**. Linda Lowery and Richard Keep, children's book authors and illustrators, are available for Skype interviews for a fee.
10. **[Mixxer](#)**. This group helps connect language learners seeking partners to practice their language skills via Skype.